

PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS

IN CHARGE OF
LUCY L. DROWN

THE LONDON PUBLIC-SCHOOL NURSE

BY HONNOR MORTEN

[Miss Honnor Morten, a trained nurse, graduate of the London Hospital, is a member of the London School Board, which originated and put into practice the system of school nursing which she has described in the following paper. Miss Morten founded the Hoxton Social Settlement, and has been the inspiration of many independent movements among women, all progressive, social, and unselfish. She is well-known among nurses, writers, educators, and social reformers as a fearless and inspiring leader of high purpose.—LILLIAN D. WALD.]

So long ago as 1891, at the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, Dr. Malcolm Morris gave it as his opinion that a staff of specially educated nurses should visit the public elementary schools regularly to inspect the children. He spoke chiefly with reference to ringworm, but there are other contagious and infectious diseases that are just as much spread through schools, many of which are even more dangerous and uncleanly. But there is often a long time between the inception of an idea and the putting of it into practice, and it was not until 1897 that "The London School Nurses' Society" was formed, and even now the staff of nurses supplied cannot visit a quarter of the elementary schools. The society is a purely voluntary one, dependent on subscriptions, but it was founded by a member of the London School Board, and Lord Breay, chairman of the School Board, is vice-president of the school nurses. It was therefore easy to secure the necessary official permission for the nurse to enter the schools.

The following quotation from the first report of the society gives the best idea of the work:

"Already three nurses visit some of the poorest schools, and attend to the small ills of the scholar—such as sore heels and inflamed eyes. Excellent results follow their ministrations; each is able to visit four schools in one day and see about one hundred children, who are sent to her, one by one, by the teachers. Probably it will be difficult to im-

press on the public the importance of the work to be done or the necessity for these nurses, but it must be remembered that the sore heel soon becomes poisoned if left to London dirt, and that the inflamed eyes often lose all power of seeing simply through neglect. There is no more sure way of securing the health of the people than to arrest small ills at the beginning; a nurse can see at a glance whether a child should be sent to a doctor; she can impress cleanliness; she can follow up bad cases to their homes; she can recognize the early symptoms of fevers and do much to stop the spread of those infectious diseases which so often devastate our schools. It is found that cases of bad eyes and dirty heads are practically stamped out of a school by six months' regular visiting; consequently each nurse is able to enlarge the scope of her work as time goes on."

It should be mentioned that the medical inspection of children as carried out in New York does not exist in London, and that the London School Board, with sixty thousand children in its schools, has only one permanent medical officer, who sits up at the central office and collects statistics. It is possible that the nurse is, for small ills, more useful than the doctor, for where the doctors in New York exclude some fifty cases of contagious eye-disease and some one hundred cases of parasites of body every week, the London nurses do not necessarily exclude, but clean generally and treat the children, and, if the cases are very bad, follow them up to their homes and see that they get medical attention there.

It is perfectly certain that medical inspection of school-children must come in London soon: we cannot afford much longer to lag behind the United States and the Continent, for Belgium, Germany, and other countries have their examinations. But it is to be hoped that the London scheme when formulated may include both doctor and nurse, and that the New York scheme might be amended by the addition of nurses. Some selections from a school-nurse's report-book are given in conclusion:

“*No. 1 School.*—“There is very little difference in the numbers at this school. Since Easter they have been decreasing a little. One sees on an average sixty-five children three times a week. There are very few head cases and not many eyes. The chief ailments are sore heels and poisoned fingers, and casualties such as burns, cuts, etc., keep up the numbers. The head mistress and head master in this school are most interested, and do all they can to help. Several parents seen, and their co-operation secured.”

“*No. 11 School.*—“The numbers increase in this school. The eye cases are falling off, but a good many new children, chiefly foreigners

and new scholars, come. The sore faces are disappearing. Average number forty-five three times a week, making a total of one hundred and ten."

School No. 3.—"Numbers decreasing. Sore throats prevalent. One case of chicken-pox sent home. A great many extra eye cases. No heads. Visited twice a week."

School No. 4.—"This school is now visited once a week. Scarcely any eye or head cases. There are a great many sores and cuts and poisoned fingers. Two cases of mumps sent home."

School No. 5.—"First visited on May 25. There are a great many eye and head cases in the junior mixed and special departments, and there is much to be done. The head mistress of the junior mixed department is most helpful. School visited three times a week."

THE ORANGE VISITING NURSES' SETTLEMENT

BY MARGARET H. PIERSON

THE visiting nurse has become an established factor in the economy of nursing, and among the various centres that are coming into existence for the development of her work is one in Orange, New Jersey. This is a settlement, and the fundamental principles underlying all real settlement work will be worked out as far as possible by the residents. The head worker is a graduate of the Orange Training-School, of two years' experience in district nursing. Associated with her are two other graduate nurses of many years' experience in hospital and private nursing. The other residents are pupil nurses who come for instruction from the Training-School. Their term is for two months. The house is larger than the present need demands, hence it is possible to rent two rooms to three physicians who come for daily office hours. Two of these doctors are women, one also being a graduate of the Training-School. Rooms are rented at usual rates to graduate nurses, and one room is also converted into a School for Domestic Science, in charge of a Pratt Institute graduate. It is hoped that in time this may be developed into a school which will prove of great value to graduates and undergraduates, as well as to neighborhood classes which may be formed. The part of the house which originally was an Italian butcher shop is now an attractive reception-room, which may be rented for lectures, guild meetings, alumnae meetings, etc. By these various means